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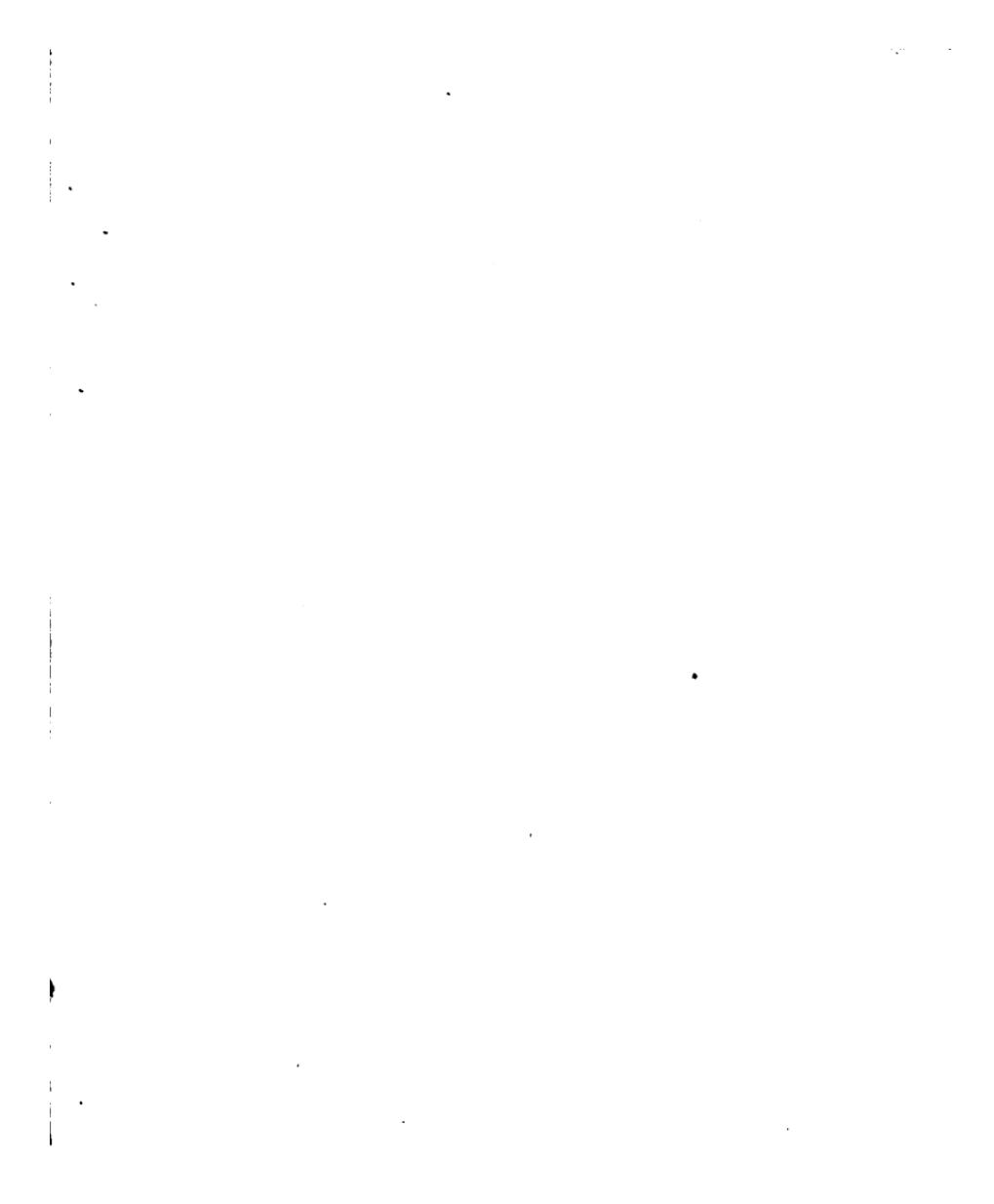
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An Illustrated Souvenir
OF
Victoria House.







THE QUEEN.

From the Photograph by Messrs. W. & D. Downey, London.

An Illustrated Souvenir
of
Victoria House,

The Head-Quarters of the
Royal Commission for Great Britain at
the World's Columbian Exposition,
Chicago, 1893.

By
Charles Eyre Pascoe,
Editor of "London of To-Day."

London :
Johnstone, Norman & Co.,
67, New Bond Street, W.

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The "London of To-Day" Publications.

*Beguest of
Irving K. Pond
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MESSRS. JOHN STONE, NORMAN & CO., the well-known London firm entrusted by the British Royal Commission to the World's Columbian Exhibition at Chicago, with the work of decorating and furnishing the interior of Victoria House, have asked me to prepare for them an illustrated trifle, to serve in some sort as a remembrance of their connection with the building.

I comply with their request with a great deal of pleasure; and none the less willingly because I have been privileged to

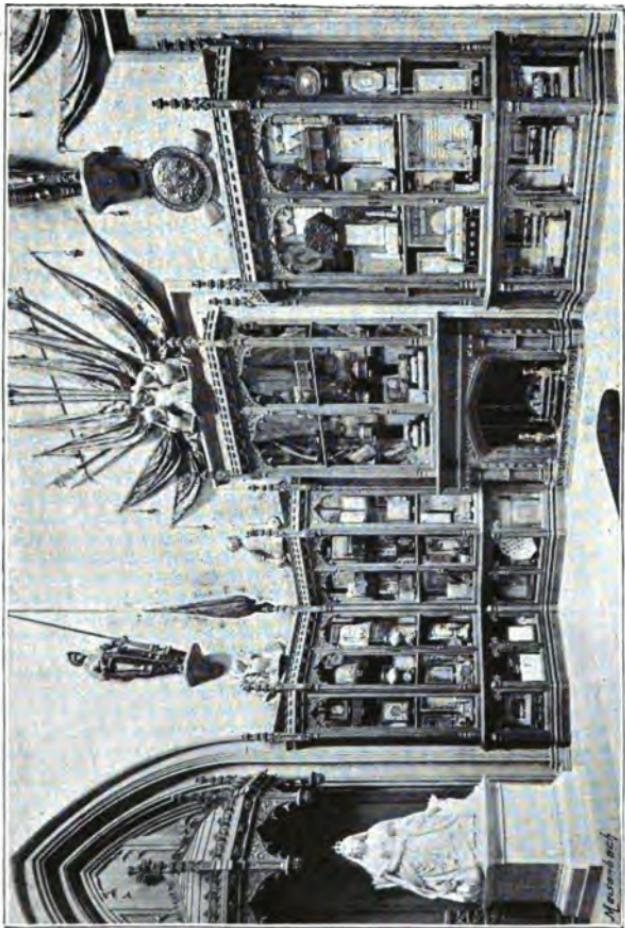
VICTORIA HOUSE.

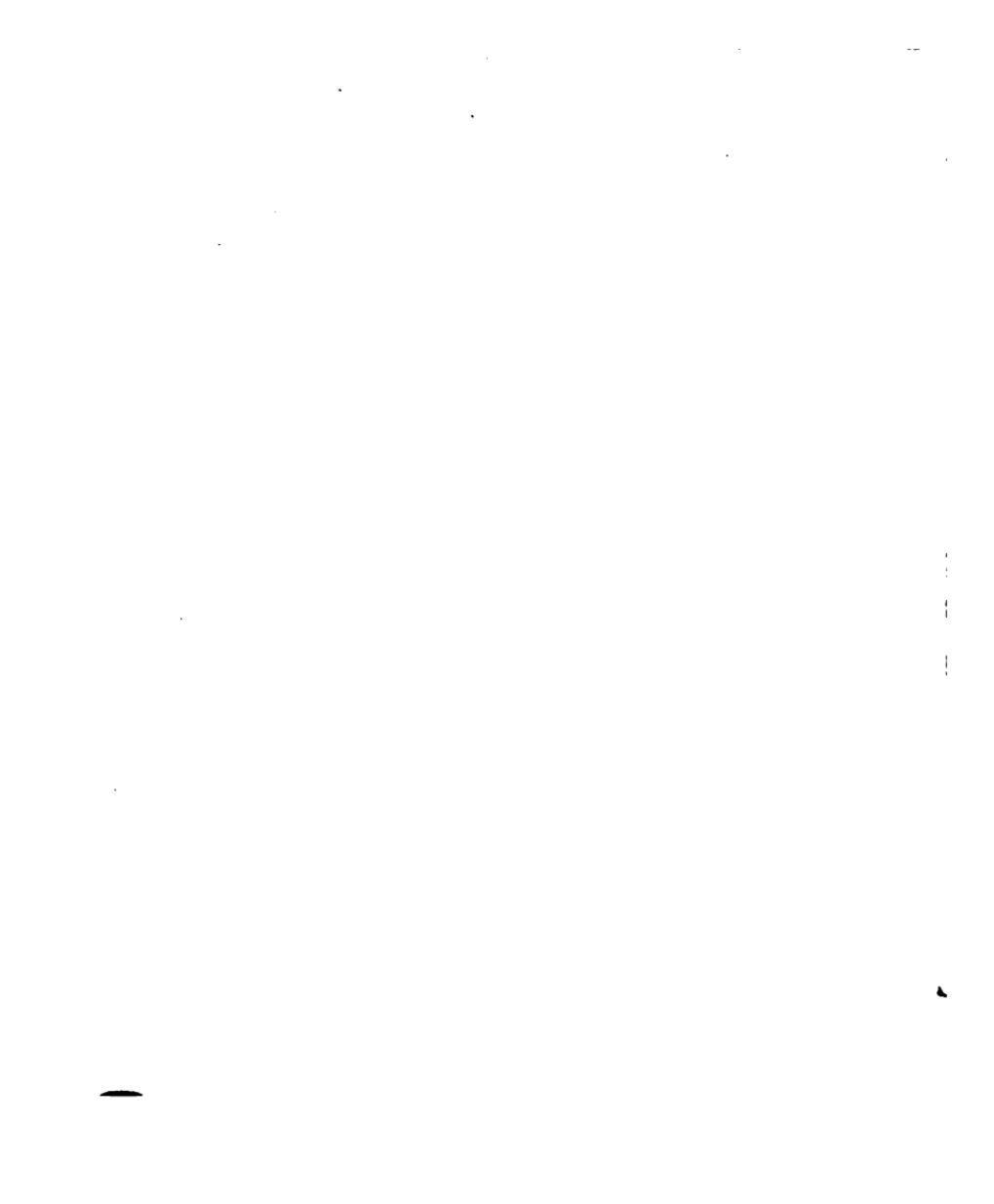
know the members of the firm personally for a number of years.

But I do so with much more readiness, because from time to time, in London, I have been made familiar with the admirable work they have done for H.M. the Queen at Buckingham Palace, and Windsor Castle ;—as witness the several carved cabinets in the State Vestibule, reserved to the display of the Jubilee gifts to Her Majesty, and with other good work there completed by them,—also at Marlborough House, for H.R.H. the Prince of Wales ; and, quite recently, in fitting-up the principal apartments at York House, St. James's Palace, for the Prince's son, the Duke of York.

Furthermore, the opportunity was given me of seeing, as it progressed, an altogether unique and sumptuous suite of decorative, and other furniture, for a Music-Room

STATE VESTIBULE, WINDSOR CASTLE.





VICTORIA HOUSE.

of an American mansion, done by them under Mr. Alma-Tadema's (the well-known English Royal Academician) supervision ; than which, I make bold to say, no more beautiful or excellent examples of skilled workmanship, incident to such trade as Messrs. Johnstone, Norman & Co. are engaged in, ever passed from the hands of any Firm, British or Foreign.

For these reasons, then, I gladly enter upon the compilation of this *brochure*, intended to be partly descriptive, and partly commemorative, and wholly (as I venture to hope) in the interests of a Firm of London manufacturers who have done so much to maintain and promote the old-time English renown for care, skill, and thoroughness on the part of the workman ; and courtesy, attention, and straightforward dealing on the part of the master.

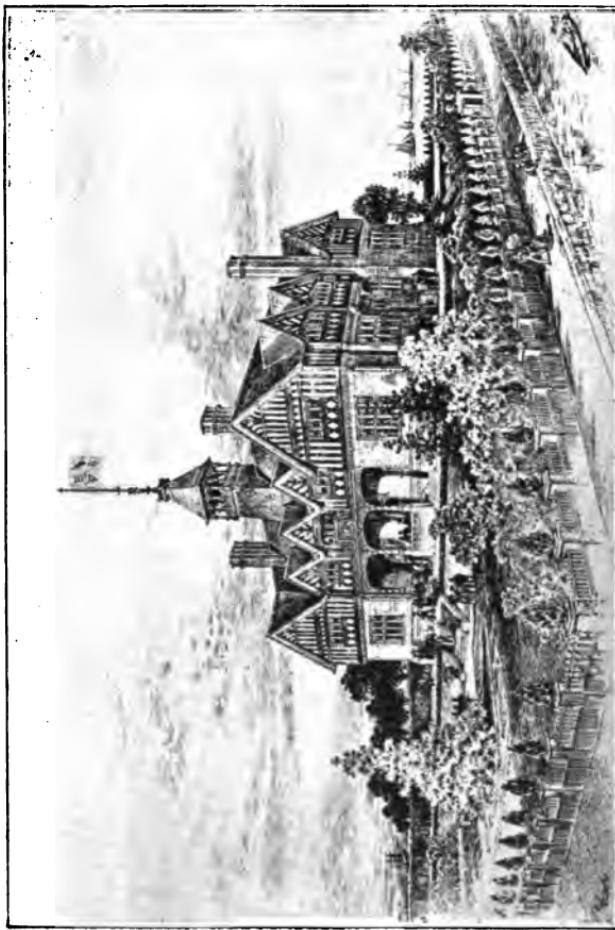
VICTORIA HOUSE.

It is certain that Americans know how to appreciate such qualities, wherever they may be found, quite as much as Englishmen. I do not suppose that they are less rarely found, or are less highly valued to-day, in the business transactions of life, in either country, than formerly.

The partiality of a friend may be conceded some little latitude in devising a compliment, or penning a Note of Introduction ; at all events, when, as in the present case, he tenders it with all goodwill and proper respect to whomsoever such note may come

CHARLES EYRE PASCOE.

LONDON, *1st April, 1893.*



VICTORIA HOUSE.

VICTORIA HOUSE.



ICTORIA HOUSE, the Head-quarters of the British Royal Commission, and so named, by the Queen's own wish, as serving to indicate the great personal interest taken by Her Majesty in all that concerns the success of the World's Columbian Exposition, is intended to represent a typical example of an old English half-timbered manor-house of the sixteenth century; the Tudor period so-called, 1550

VICTORIA HOUSE.

to 1600, embracing the reign of Queen Elizabeth. Americans who have journeyed through England may possibly have seen occasional examples of such dwellings (though not perhaps representative) in passing through the Warwickshire country, in Gloucestershire perhaps, and in and around Chester.

Very pleasant are such houses now to look at, and very desirable too to live in, furnished with every elegance that the fashion of the times dictates, and provided with every convenience that the latitude or inventiveness of nineteenth century architecture contrives ; but time was when many such manor-houses were the reverse of comfortable according to our present ideas of domestic comfort.

The great hall, for example, of Henry Tudor's time (Henry VII., first of the line)

VICTORIA HOUSE.

whatever may have been the case in the reigns of his immediate successors, was at night reserved as a sleeping-place to the lords' retainers; the rooms were not seldom strewn with rushes which had often served their purpose for months, if not for years together; and generally there was an aspect of dirt, racket, and discomfort about the place, which nowadays would stamp its owner as a man of very poor circumstances and Bohemian proclivities.

An earl of Northumberland, a nobleman of the first rank and condition of that same Henry's time, blessed with a large family and a retinue of more



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than 150 servants to boot, was content with but "one large table and three long benches" as the sole furniture of his great apartment of state. And those, by the way, he was accustomed to cart about with him from place to place in Yorkshire, in which county he possessed three houses of some estate, whenever he made a shift of residence, according to the season of the year.

A fine enough country was Old England, in the early sixteenth century, to live in ; a picturesque country, with plenty of room to roam about in ; plenty of good cheer, revelry, and junketing ; sufficient supply of ale, wine, bread and beef for those who looked for it ; and good opportunity too of sword-crossing and cudgel-play for any in the humour ; but as to chairs, tables, carpets, furniture—"fixings," and such like exhibits of domestic comfort,

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your average English manor-house down to the close of the reign of Edward VI. was in many respects woefully deficient.

Bare boards, stone floors, a bench and table or two, some show of bedsteads, above stairs, "settles," and odd chamber-bits of rude workmanship,—these generally comprised the most that it could discover in the way of comfort indoors. Out of doors, a man, and for that matter his consort, had a merry time, which brought many compensations; and doubtless when 'he or she came home to roost, neither was too nice as to details of accommodation; so long as a big fire burned briskly on the kitchen hearth, and there was good store of venison, game, and meats in the larder, and of wine and ale in the cellar.

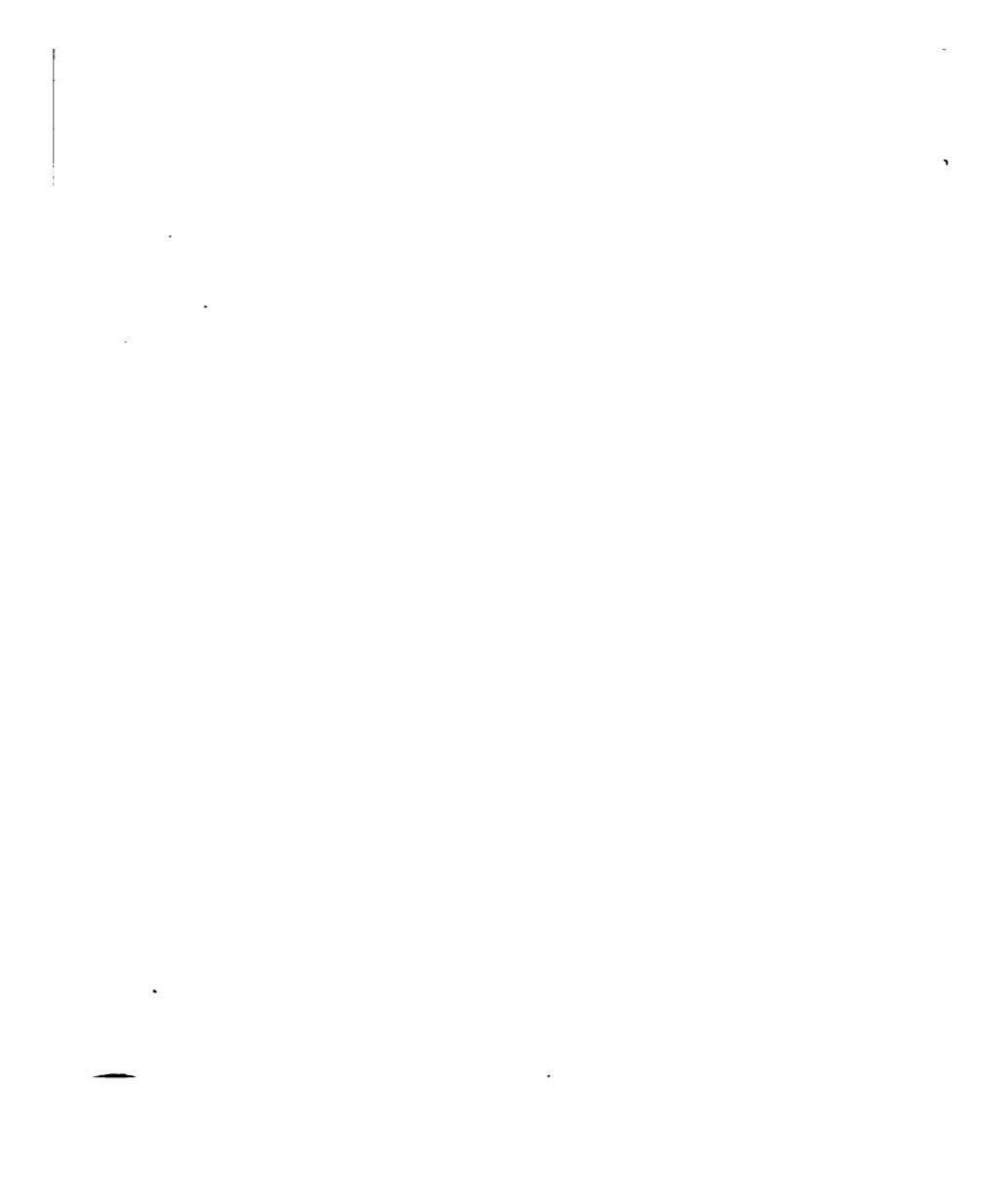


VICTORIA HOUSE.

In Queen Elizabeth's reign, things began to show differently. She herself, as we know, was fond of dress and display ; and such predilections in a sovereign usually beget the like inclinations in a subject. One form of display commonly leads to another ; and so by degrees fashion and custom, and a certain cultivated sense of elegance common to all royal courts, worked their way and spread abroad a taste for greater neatness, order, and refinement, in the arrangements of the dwelling.

Moreover, the Queen's frequent royal progresses through her kingdom induced a kind of rivalry among the English nobility, to spare no expense in entertaining her at their homes in as princely a manner as possible. Indeed, in not a few instances with them it was a case of " needs must." She came upon their mansions and castles,





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as is well known, with a far greater retinue than Lear's, and with one that was not to be abated by so much as a single lackey. "Her Majesty's coming" necessitated all sorts of provision being made for additional accommodation, and many expedients being debated to insure her gratification and comfort. It is not difficult to see how these royal progresses of Queen Elizabeth tended to greater refinement in the English home, whether castle, manor-house, or plainer abode. The Queen's court of London passed periodically through the provinces.

But to leave matters of history, and to deal with facts of the present.

This same Victoria House, in the entrance-way of which we may suppose the Visitor

VICTORIA HOUSE.

now stands, illustrative of a half-timbered old English manor-house of the sixteenth century, was designed by the honorary architect to the British Commission which occupies it, Colonel R. W. Edis, F.S.A., well known in England as one of the leading architects of the day, and to the generality of his compatriots as the popular commanding officer of the "Artists' Corps" of London Volunteers. The house itself—to pass to particulars—was constructed by the G. A. Fuller Company of Chicago; the terra-cotta work, from Colonel Edis's designs, was done by the "North-western Terra-cotta Company" of Chicago; and the interior of the building floor to roof was decorated, and furnished, by Johnstone, Norman & Co., of 67, New Bond Street, London, under the advice and personal direction of Mr. Thomas J. Norman.

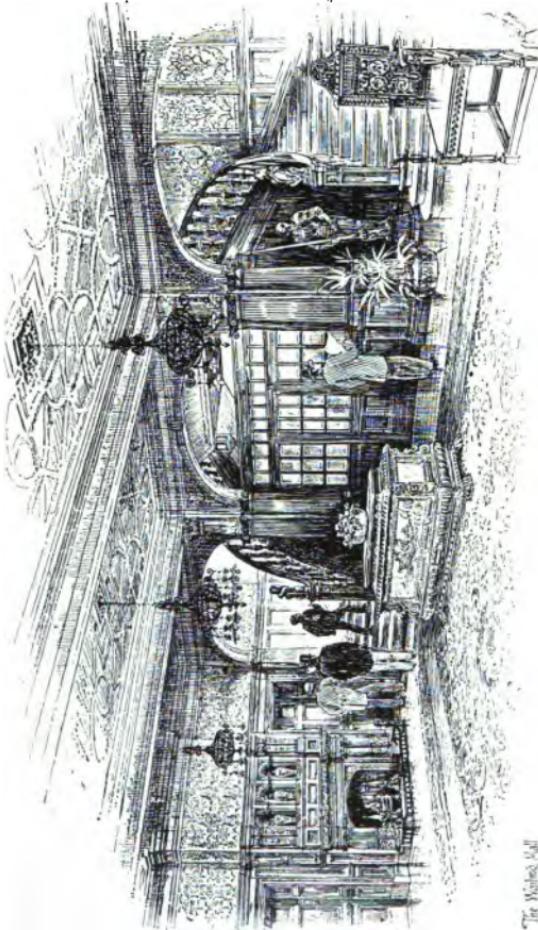
VICTORIA HOUSE.

Thus much in making due acknowledgement of the part taken by each in the design, construction, furnishing, and decoration of Victoria House, withholding till later the names of certain other English Firms of note, which have contributed, in their several lines, much excellent work to the building's final completion.

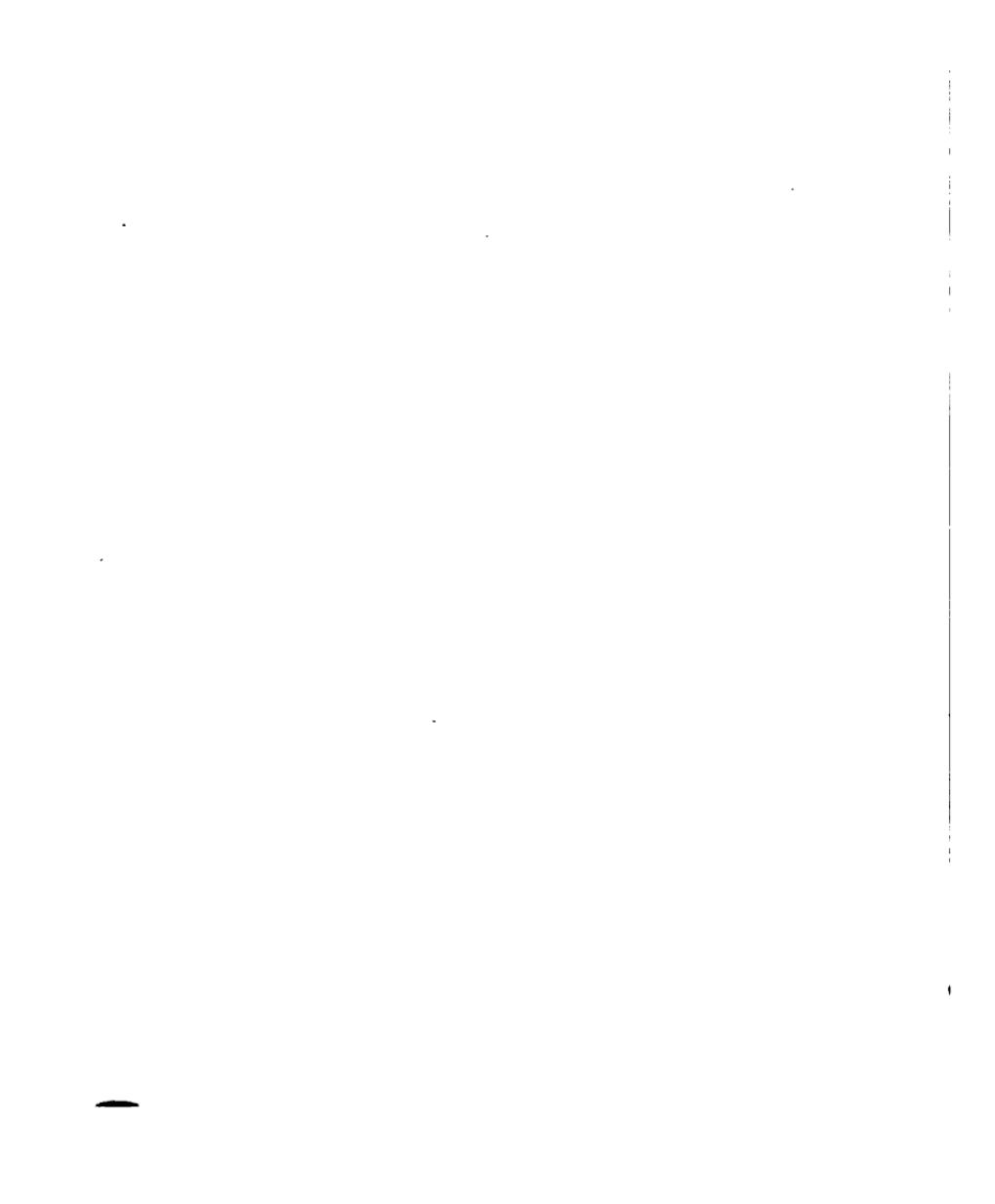
THE GRAND HALL AND STAIRCASE.

HERE we are face to face at once with a reminiscence of Queen Elizabeth. The modelled plaster ceiling of the Hall itself is copied from a ceiling in Plas Mawr (*Plas* is Welsh for Hall), Conway, N. Wales, built about the year 1550 by the Wynns of Gwydir, and locally known as Queen Elizabeth's palace. This was one of the many places honoured by that queen's attentions, remote though it stands from the capital. The royal cypher, E.R., is frequently met with in the decorations of the house.

The ceiling over the Staircase and principal Landing of the hall of Victoria House



“In Witten”



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is taken from one still existing at that picturesque and romantic spot in beautiful Derbyshire, well known to Americans who have travelled through England,—Haddon Hall; originally built, as most of us know, by the Peverils, and afterwards owned by the Vernons (the names of Dorothy Vernon and Sir John Manners will at once occur to the Visitor: we have no space here to indulge in retrospective glances, however much we may be that way tempted), and in present possession of the Duke of Rutland—the most perfect example of an old English mansion to be found in England.

The remainder of the enriched plaster work, hereabouts to be noted, is from designs of Colonel Edis above-mentioned, to whose excellent taste and professional skill the oak-panelling and staircase designs are also due.

VICTORIA HOUSE.

I have now to express my obligations to Mr. Owen W. Davis, himself designer of them, for the following interesting description of the several beautiful examples of carved-oak cabinet, and other work to be seen in the Grand Hall:

Such carved-oak work is done in the



THE CASSONÉ.

VICTORIA HOUSE

Italian style of the Renaissance, being most appropriate for the massive and substantial treatment required for this apartment.

Facing the entrance is the "Cassoné," so named. This magnificent and almost monumental Coffer is reproduced from an old Florentine example in the Royal Palace at Naples, with sumptuous carvings (in part solid gilt), further enriched with a painted frontal panel on a gilt ground, in allegorical portraiture of the "Departure of Columbus from Spain," by Mr. F. Hamilton Jackson, R.B.A.

A large Arm-chair at hand displays in vigorously sculptured bas-relief "The Discovery of America."

"About two hours before mid-



"COLUMBUS'" CHAIR.

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night," writes Robertson, the Historian, "on October 11th, 1492, after a long and adventurous voyage of nearly ten weeks, Columbus . . . was standing on the Forecastle of his ship, when he observed a light in the distance, and scarcely two hours later the joyful cry of 'Land! Land!' was heard from the crew of the *Pinta*, which kept always ahead of the other ships. As soon as the sun rose all the boats were manned and armed, and Columbus was the first European who set foot on the New World which he had discovered."

The companion Fauteuil, rendered in the style of Francois premier, is especially interesting, being of that old kind known as "Cacquetteuse" (*i.e.* Cackle or Gossip chair).

The remainder of the chairs, etc., are designed on similar ancient lines, and include two grand old settles, with massive carvings, copied from some existing furniture that belonged to the famous Medici family, and now in the Pitti Palace at Florence.

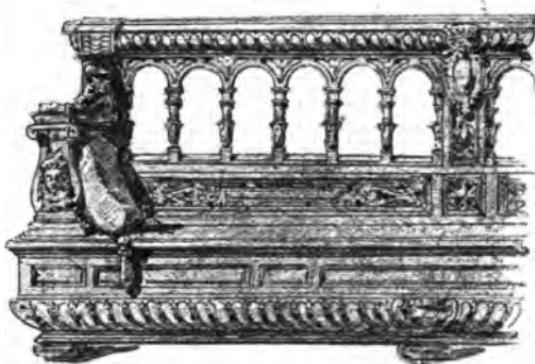
VICTORIA HOUSE.

The tables were suggested by an example in the Museum at Exeter, England, a city, by the way, well worthy the attention of holiday-making Americans.

Two pedestaled Knights in Armour guard the Stairway, where also will be found an interesting specimen of a chiming "Grand-father's Clock," formerly part of the necessary furniture of most old English homes.

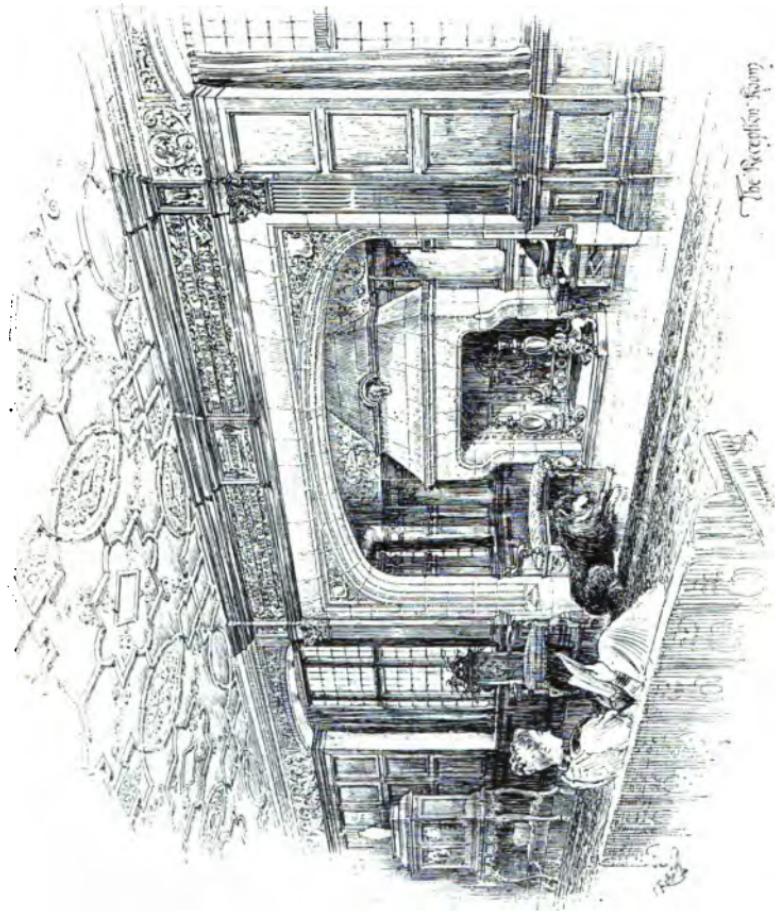


THE RECEPTION-ROOM.

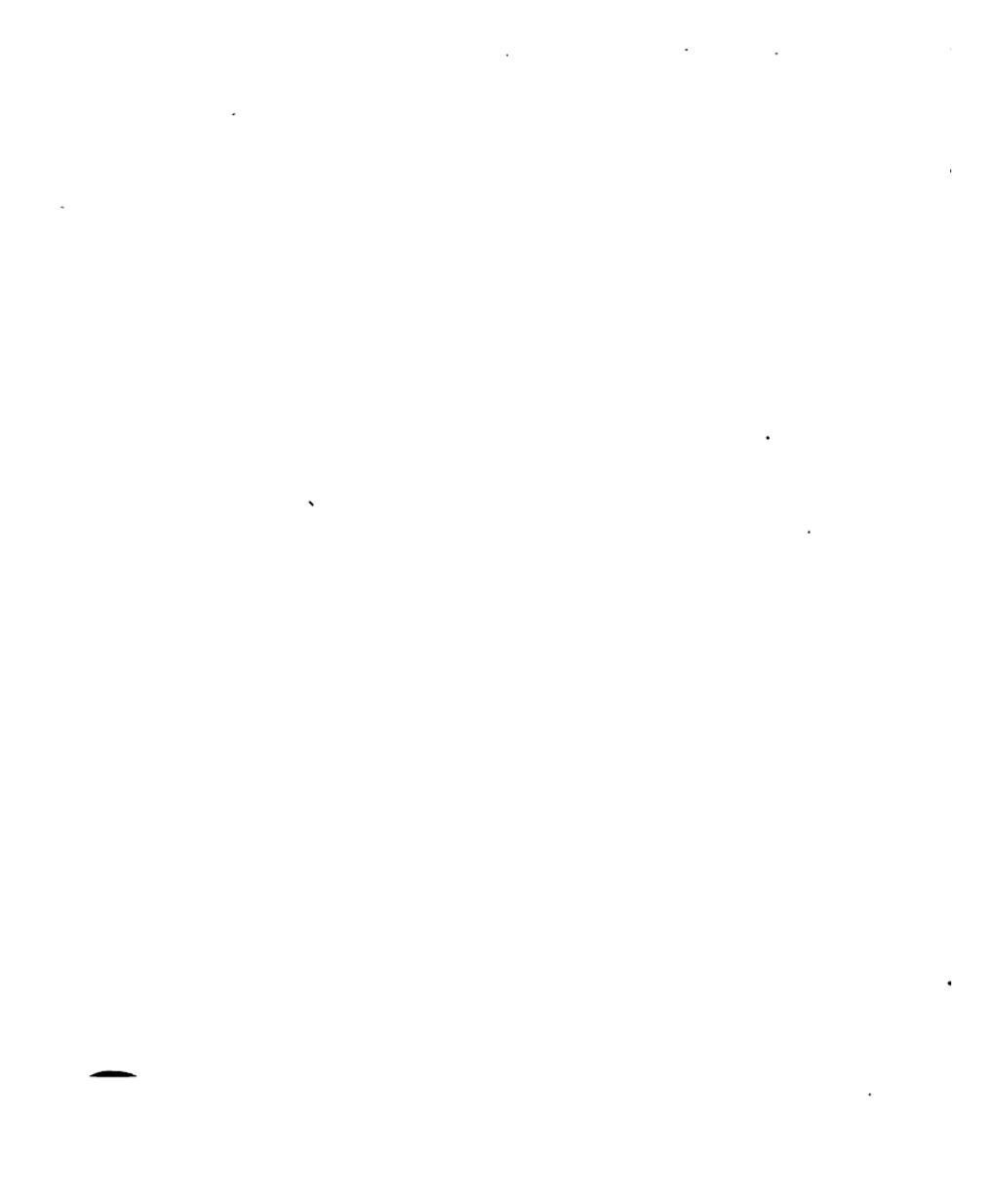


CARVED SETTEE AFTER JEAN GOUJON.

HERE again the modelled plaster ceiling is of old English design, reproduced from that of the Banqueting Hall of Crewe Hall, Staffordshire, an admirably preserved example of old Elizabethan architecture. It may



The 'Reception' Room



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be of interest to mention, that the original has also been made use of in building the Ball-room at Sandringham for the Prince of Wales. The plaster frieze, which is particularly noteworthy, was specially designed and modelled for this apartment. The inglenook with its baronial-looking terra-cotta fireplace and archway, and the oak panelling, by Colonel Edis, are equally noticeable.

In the work of furnishing this stately apartment, the purpose of Mr. Thomas J. Norman, who planned, and supervised, and the aim of Mr. Owen Davis, who has so admirably carried out the scheme, is to present generally a good conception of a fine old-English drawing- or "withdrawing"-room, as it was formerly, and more correctly named.

We have here several examples of divers periods, each example judiciously chosen,

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and the whole skilfully brought into a kind of harmony ; style blending with style, that subtle connecting link which may be said to run through all good periods, being readily discernible by the cultured eye, accustomed to appreciate such points of detail in the nice arrangement, or reproduction of fitting examples of old artistic furniture.

Standing prominent in this room, are four magnificent cabinets as follow :

No. 1, an adaptation of Archbishop Sharpe's beautiful oak cabinet, dated 1621, now in the possession of Sir William Stirling-Maxwell. This



"ARCHBISHOP SHARPE'S" CABINET.

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choice example of carved and inlaid work (ebony and boxwood are employed in the execution of the design) is a model of just proportion and refined treatment in the production of what is technically known as "moulded cabinet-work."

No. 2.—A large and admirable copy of an old Scotch "Aumrie" (French "Armoire" = clothes-press, or cupboard) is of the period of James I., taken from an original example in possession of the Bass family of Burton-on-Trent.

No. 3, a very richly carved cabinet, is after one (probably of Flemish origin) preserved in the well-known Cluny Museum.

No. 4, perhaps the handsomest of all—a walnut cabinet on cabriole legs—may be considered a triumph of nineteenth-century cabinet-maker's skill. The general design is faithfully rendered from a Dutch

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example of the period of William and Mary. Americans will not forget the favourite English residence of this king at Hampton Court, still replete with interesting reminiscences of his day ; nor the historian Macaulay's references to the King's life there. The cabinet under review is lavish of "marqueterie" so-called, and is built up of ivory, ebony, box, and mother-o'-pearl wrought on pear-wood, in semblance of flowers, foliage and birds in elegant profusion.

An admirably proportioned "Fauteuil," or elbow-chair, in keeping with the cabinet, and enriched with carvings, and what is known as "Tarsia" or "intarsiatura" work—a kind of mosaic in woods—claims relationship with an old Scottish chair from Linlithgow Palace, no doubt of the period of Mary Queen of Scots.

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Glancing around, the visitor will find among other things here collected, a Table copied from one at Aston Hall, Warwickshire, a mansion built about 1635 by Sir Thomas Holte, whose name yet survives in



THE "ASTON HALL" TABLE.

history for his loyalty to the Stuarts. Indeed, the marks of Roundhead shot, still visible (we learn) in parts of the southern wing, testify of the siege Aston Hall submitted to in the King's cause.

Incidentally it may be mentioned that

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the carved work at Aston is of the most interesting description; including elaborate chimney-pieces in white marble and alabaster, richly ornamented oaken stairways, and fine plaster ceilings. The walls are yet hung with tapestries by Mistress Mary Holte and her sister, daughters' of the house, in memory of King Charles' visit to Aston Hall on his way to relieve Banbury

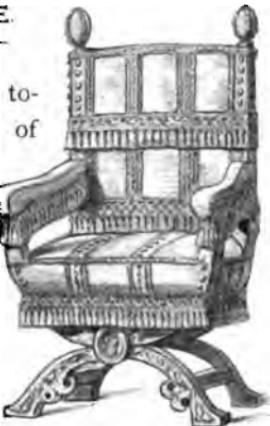
Castle. The Hall, by the way, is reputed to have its "haunted chamber."

Another reminiscence of the period of the Stuarts will be found in King Charles' Chair from the original in the Museum at South Kensington. It is of ebony, elaborately carved in the style known as Anglo-Portuguese. A side



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table of similar treatment, together with an X chair of elegant proportions, completes this group. Here is also the famous "Knole" chair, so named after one in that well-known mansion. A counterpart (or replica) of the original once stood (so I am given to understand) in the committee-room of Moreton-in-the-Marsh (Gloucestershire) cottage-hospital. It was locally credited with having been the very chair in which the King sat during his trial at Westminster Hall. Unrestored, its tattered velvet coverings, faded silk braid, and even tarnished studs, all bore evidence of the ravages of time. It is, or was, a beautiful chair—a chair of regal dignity and



THE "KNOLE" CHAIR.

VICTORIA HOUSE.

peculiarly imposing proportions, and whether or not we may trust tradition as to its actual history, is sufficiently interesting as

an example of a piece of furniture of Stuart times.

The "Cluny" Chair, so named, standing near at hand, is taken from an arm-chair in the Cluny Museum, which originally belonged to the lord of Effiat Castle, built in the reign of Louis XIII. by Marshal Anthony of

THE "CLUNY" CHAIR.

Effiat. The rose and white damask panels forming the back part and seat were framed with crimson cut-velvet of Genoa, embroidered with lace.



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Other examples of chairs, settles, etc., standing in the Reception-Room are done from examples: (1) at Knole House, the famous residence in Kent of the Sackvilles Earls of Dorset, one of the best-preserved and most interesting of the stately homes of England, exhibiting the architectural style of several periods from the Anglo-Norman to the reign of James I.; (2) at Penshurst, the birthplace, near Tunbridge Wells, of the gallant and accomplished Philip Sidney, and of his descendant, that later sturdy patriot, Algernon Sidney, beheaded in the year 1683. In connection with which historical spot we call to mind the lines:—

“Here mighty Dudley once would rove
To plan his triumphs in the grove;
Here looser Waller ever gay,
With Sacharissa in dalliance lay;
And Philips sidelong yonder spring
His lavish carols wont to sing.”

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To continue our enumeration — (3) from Haddon Hall, before referred to in this booklet, the lodestone (if we may use the expression) in beautiful Derbyshire, of every tourist, English or American ; (4) from Hardwicke, near Chesterfield, one of the beautiful country seats of the Duke of Devonshire, a perfect specimen of an Elizabethan mansion ; (5) Speke Hall, the residence of Sir William Norreys (the name will be remembered by all students of by-gone times of England's history) ; (6) Ham House, the seat of the Earls of Dysnrt, near Richmond in Surrey, originally built in 1610 as a country house for Henry, Prince of Wales, a curious example of a mansion of that time, which did not escape the criticism of Horace Walpole, who lived in the neighbourhood ; and, lastly, from the well-known palace at Hampton Court, the most interest-

VICTORIA HOUSE

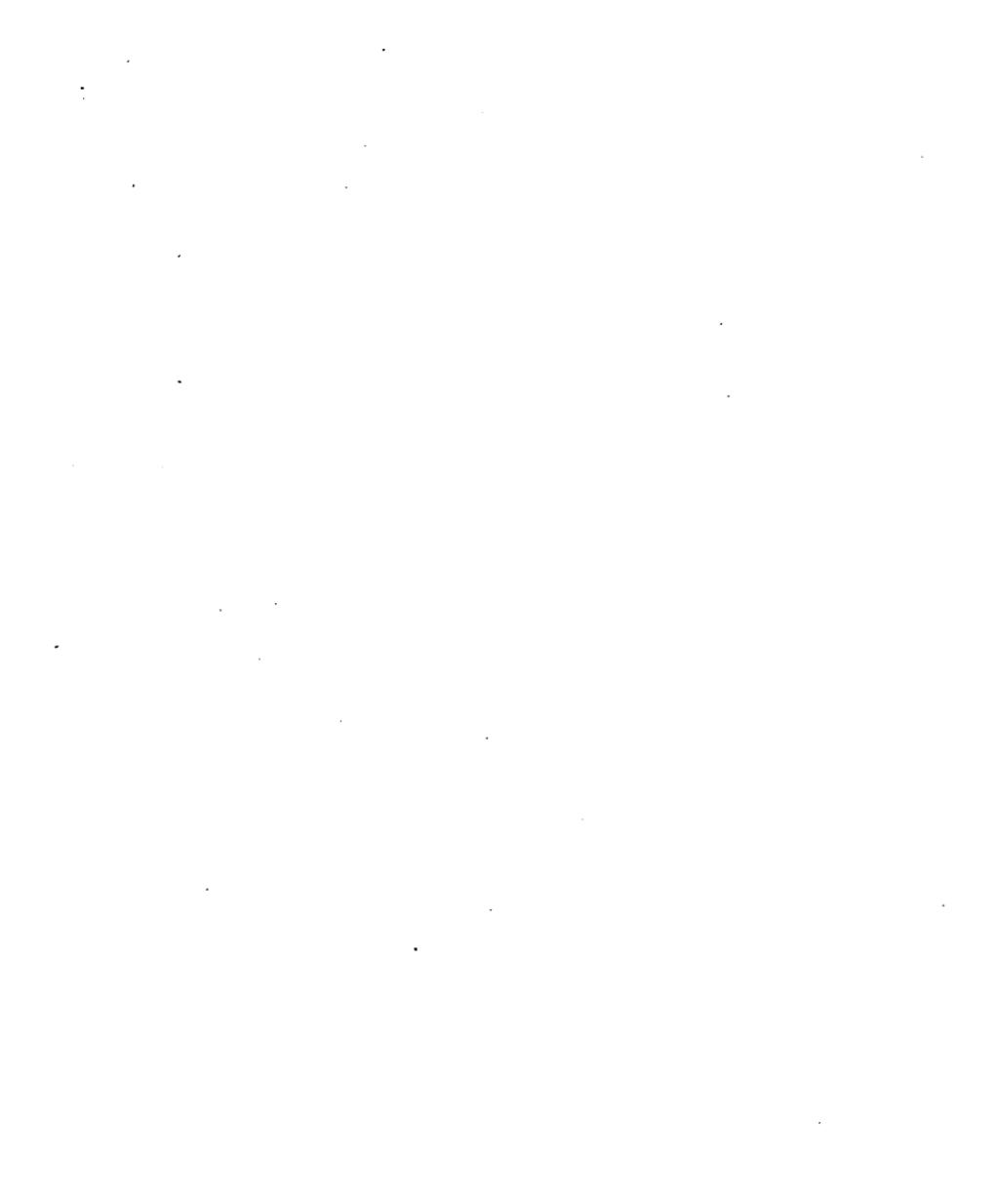
ing of any, recalling the glories of Wolsey the cardinal, and his "dread lord, the king," and the still greater glory of the after reign of William of Orange.

These several historical places of old England have been brought under contribution in fulfilment of the purpose of Mr. Thomas J. Norman, and his instructions to the designer. It need not be pointed out how excellently well Mr. Owen Davis has executed his part of the work. The many and diversified examples of beautiful furniture—we ought not to forget to direct attention to the large carved-oak settee, wrought after the manner of Jean Goujon, a French master of the sixteenth century—selected, reproduced, and now brought under notice of the Visitor, sufficiently attest his ability as an artist, and the good judgment of Mr. Norman in retaining his services.

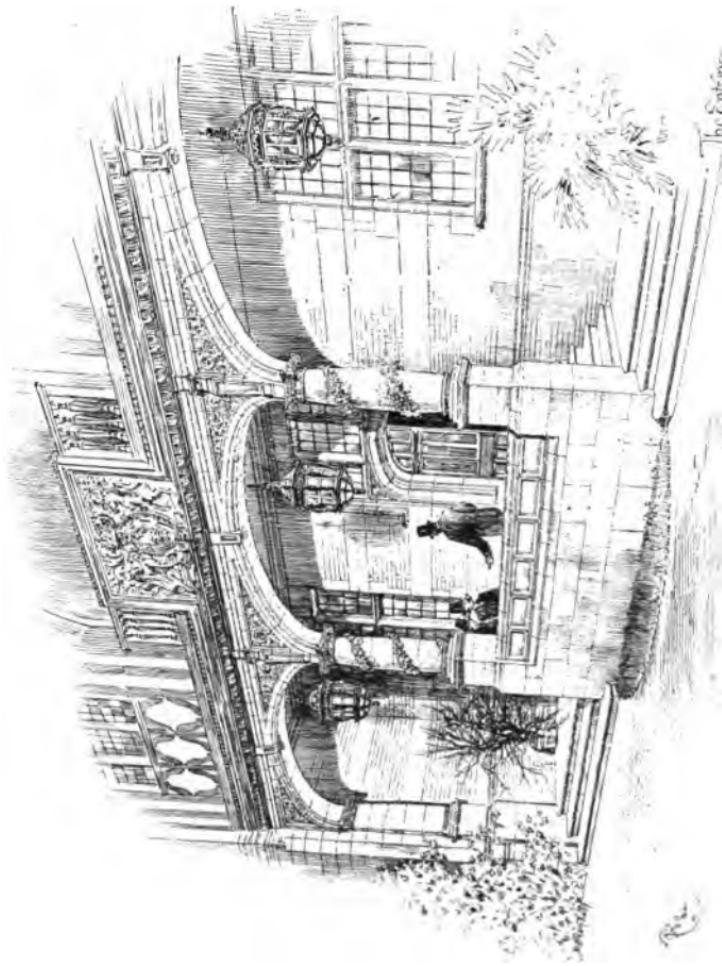
VICTORIA HOUSE.

Victoria House exhibits not the least worthy evidence of English artistic appreciativeness and skill to be found at the Chicago Exposition.





The Concierge



THE LIBRARY

is entirely of oak, the ribbed ceiling (in geometrical form), the book-cases, and paneling being designed by Colonel Edis.

Here the furniture naturally enough partakes of the sedate characteristics of a room reserved to reading. The arm-chairs, from originals in the Cluny and South Kensington museums, and the Louvre ; the tables, settees, book-stands, etc., are each and all deserving of attentive inspection, each separate piece of cabinet-work being, as nearly as requirements would admit, a faithful but not too servile rendering of some old Master's conception.

THE DINING-ROOM, OR WAITING-ROOM

HERE the modelled plaster ceiling is reproduced from the famous one at Campden House, the London residence of the Duke of Argyll.

The oak-panelling and furniture may be said to illustrate a simple treatment of a modern room of Elizabethan character.

The embossed leather noticeable on the walls here, on the Grand Staircase, and elsewhere in Victoria House are by Jeffrey & Co., an eminent firm of London manufacturers, who also supplied the various wall-papers used throughout the building. It may be mentioned that the richly embossed pattern used for this particular room, was specially

VICTORIA HOUSE.

designed by that firm for the Ball-room at Sandringham House, the country residence of the Prince of Wales.

THE COMMISSIONERS' ROOM, which is a handsome apartment on the first floor, fitted up for the use of the members of the Royal Commission, will serve the purposes both of a club and business room.

The furniture is of oak, of an antique character, in keeping with the other parts of the building, and is designed by Mr. Owen Davis. The chairs, lounges, etc., are of that inviting description usually associated with men's comfort in such clubs as the "Carlton," "Reform," etc., of Pall Mall and Piccadilly ; or for that matter any New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, or other American club of the first rank you care to name.

VICTORIA HOUSE.

It only remains now to add that, in carrying out the decoration and furnishing of Victoria House, Messrs. Johnstone, Norman & Co. are greatly indebted to the following Firms which have rendered them most valuable assistance, either by supplying, or specially executing, objects of Decorative Art, of their respective manufactures, for the various rooms already described :

The contributions of Messrs. Jeffrey & Co., before-mentioned under the heading "The Waiting-Room," in respect of their wall-decorations of embossed leather, which add so much to the pleasing effect of the building interiorly, have been remarked upon.

Messrs. Yates & Co., of the Royal Carpet Works, Wilton, near Salisbury—a town of well-known fame in this particular branch of trade—have supplied the hand-woven

VICTORIA HOUSE

Axminster carpets (chiefly from Oriental examples) laid down throughout the building.

The locks and hinges of wrought and polished iron, from old English examples, also the electric light fittings used in the principal rooms, were designed and manufactured by Messrs. Starkie, Gardner & Co., of London.

The stoves, fenders, and fireplace fittings in Entrance Hall, and the large "Dog-stove" and fender in the Reception-Room, were specially designed and executed by Messrs. Feetham & Co., of Clifford St., London.

The iron backs to stoves in the Hall (showing the Royal Arms of Great Britain), by the same Firm, are replicas of one specially designed for the State Vestibule of Windsor Castle, by Johnstone, Norman & Co., in 1887.

VICTORIA HOUSE.

The various silken and other fabrics used in the adornment of the furniture, and as curtains to the windows, are from some of the principal looms of England and France, and for the most part are reproductions of fine old examples, both in design and colouring. Some of the most important of these have been supplied by Messrs. Ramm, Son & Crocker, of London.

The three painted glass windows on the Grand Staircase were specially designed and executed by Messrs. Campbell, Smith & Co., of London.

The pictures, amongst which are some fine Old Masters, and the various *objets d'art* in the several apartments, are from the collection of Mr. J. Ichenhäuser, 68, New Bond Street.